

with respect to social sphere. [*Laughter*] So if we are very positive in addressing those energy-related and security-related questions, that will be very helpful in addressing the problems which are confronted by people in the street in our countries. Besides, I recently visited the Middle East. Therefore, I'd like in this conversation with you today to compare the notes regarding the current state of the Middle East.

President Bush. Vladimir, thank you for having me. It's such an honor to be here. This locale where we are is a place where the President welcomed me and Laura 2 years ago, and it's great to be back here. I am looking forward to the celebration tomorrow. It is a moment where the world will recognize the great bravery and sacrifice the Russian people made in the defeat of nazism. The people of Russia suffered incredible hardship, and yet the Russian spirit never died out.

I'm equally grateful that you would take—invite me and Laura for dinner tonight. And having had one of your meals before, I'm looking forward to this one a lot.

President Putin. Recently I took a look at the coverage of your meeting with the press corps. Well, I could see how Laura attacked you sometimes, so at today's dinner we will have a chance to protect you. [*Laughter*]

President Bush. She was quite the comedian. But I'm looking forward to—Russia is a great nation, and I'm looking forward to working on—together on big problems. And I want to thank you for your work on Iran and the Middle East, and there's a lot we can do together. And so thank you for having us.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 7:45 p.m. at Novo Ogarevo, the Putins' residence in Moscow. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement Calling for Prompt Senate Consideration of Judicial Nominees May 9, 2005

Four years ago today, I nominated Justice Priscilla Owen and Judge Terry Boyle to serve on the Federal courts of appeals. Four

years later, neither has received an up-or-down vote in the Senate. Both have been rated well-qualified by the American Bar Association, the highest ABA rating a judicial nominee can receive. Both have been waiting to fill vacancies that have been designated judicial emergencies by the Judicial Conference of the United States. Much more than enough time has passed for the Senate to consider these nominations. The Senate should give these extraordinarily qualified nominees the up-or-down votes they deserve without further delay.

It is only fair that the Senate promptly consider judicial nominees on the floor, discuss and debate their qualifications, and then vote to confirm or not to confirm them. Nominees who have the support of a majority of the Senate should be confirmed. Unfortunately, a minority of Senators is blocking the will of the Senate.

Over the course of the past 4 years, the blocking of judicial nominees in the Senate has escalated to an unprecedented level. Last Congress, 10 of my appeals court nominees were filibustered. Each of these highly qualified nominees enjoyed the bipartisan support of a majority of Senators. Each would have been confirmed if given a simple up-or-down vote. Each deserved a simple up-or-down vote by the entire Senate.

I urge the Senate to put aside the partisan practices of the past and work together to ensure that all nominees are treated fairly and that all Americans receive timely justice in our Federal courts.

The President's News Conference With President Mikheil Saakashvili of Georgia in Tbilisi, Georgia

May 10, 2005

President Saakashvili. I'll say a few words in English. I want to welcome you, Mr. President, for this historic occasion. You know, right now we have in the streets of Tbilisi, as they are telling me, more than 150,000 people assembled, and I can tell you, no event in the history of this country has ever assembled anything close to these numbers. It shows the importance of this visit.